

Today's News - Monday, July 12, 2010

EDITOR'S NOTE: Just a reminder that we're three hours behind home base for the next two weeks, so newsletter will be arriving a bit later than usual.

- ArcSpace brings us a colorful school complex in France.
- Moore and Jones debate: Do good buildings make for better educated children?
- Gardner minces no words about what things about Barnard's Diana Center: "Weiss/Manfredi clearly had a thankless task."
- A great U.K. report on Detroit's "daring bid to return the land to farming" that could be "a harbinger of urban development for the western world's declining inner cities."
- Litt on Cleveland's attempt to revive Burnham's historic vision for downtown: the question is whether the new commission will "rise to the occasion or whether it caves to pressures that have led to mediocre planning and civic design in the city's recent past."
- Some radical rethinking of Long Island among the finalists in the Build a Better Burb competition.
- Cheers for Whitney Museum doing "something very bold and scary" near the High Line - with caveats.
- Roux has a most amusing encounter with Nouvel, who "is as inconsistent as he is bold"; per Prince Charles's penchant for pastiche? "Pastiche is the worst. A big mistake is better than a false friend."
- Snøhetta named to lead a great team to design the long-term transformation of Times Square.
- SOMs Hartman tapped to design the first Roman Catholic Cathedral in Orange County, CA.
- How the revolution in digital modeling is transforming 20th-century "male" architecture into something much more feminine: "Think Marilyn Monroe rather than Charlton Heston."
- A new study shows how theater seats have gotten (or need to get) wider for our broader butts.
- Calls for entries: USGBC/Bank of America Charitable Foundation Affordable Green Housing Grant Program for LEED ND projects; design a temporary use for a cleared site in a development in east Manchester, U.K.; and Expo 2010 Awards for pavilions, exhibits, or elements of pavilions and exhibits in Shanghai.

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Mikou Design Studio: Bailly School Complex, Saint-Denis, France

Do good buildings make for better educated children? As the government shelves school building projects, Rowan Moore, architecture critic, and Rick Jones, a teacher and journalist, consider whether the classroom environment affects teaching and learning- Observer (UK)

New Barnard College Diana Center shows a lapse of civic responsibility: To dislike the building - which is home to the school's art, architecture and performance programs - is the easy and obvious part...Weiss/Manfredi clearly had a thankless task. By James Gardner- The Real Deal (NYC)

Detroit gets growing: ...once the engine of America's automotive industry. Today it is a symbol of urban decay. But a daring bid to return the land to farming is sowing seeds of recovery – and could be a template for cities across the world..."We are turning Motown into Growtown." - Observer (UK)

A new Group Plan Commission for Cleveland has a chance to revise Daniel Burnham's historic vision for downtown: Inspired by more than \$1 billion in new downtown projects on the horizon...The question is whether the new commission...can rise to the occasion or whether it caves to pressures that have led to mediocre planning and civic design in the city's recent past. By Steven Litt – LMN Architects; James Corner Field Operations- Cleveland Plain Dealer

Long Island Radically Reconsidered: The Long Island Index/Rauch Foundation announced 23 finalists for its Build a Better Burb competition to reimagine the staid American suburb...a landscape ripe for reinvention as a more socially and environmentally sustainable place. -- Tobias Holler; Nasiq Khan; Nelsen Peng; Ryall Porter Sheridan Architects; Baldassano Architecture; Ryan Lovett/John Brent Simons/Patrick Cobb [images, links]- The Architect's Newspaper

Whitney on the Cusp: The Key to the Museum's Expansion Downtown: ...after 25 years of trying to build extensions to its cement fortress on Madison Avenue, the Whitney is going to do something very bold and scary...it seems ready to do...new building will not be perfect...only around 50,000 square feet will be devoted to the indoor exhibition of art...feels like way too little... -- Renzo Piano- New York Magazine

Jean Nouvel: Good for a prize, but not for a Prince: The architect whose reputation disconcerted the heir to the throne has brought his provocative talent to two new London projects...Serpentine Pavilion [and] One New Change...[he] is as inconsistent as he is bold, making buildings that lurch from the dazzlingly beautiful to the uncomfortably wrong..."Pastiche is the worst. A big mistake is better than a false friend." By Caroline Roux- Independent (UK)

Snøhetta Takes Broadway with Times Square Repairs: ...Nordic knockouts...as the lead designer for the long-term transformation of the square. -- WXY Architecture and Design; Weidlinger Associates; Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architecture; Billings Jackson Design; Bexel [image, links]- The Architect's Newspaper

Plans for Santa Ana cathedral move forward: The selection of an architect represents "the first of many steps" toward building the first Roman Catholic Cathedral in Orange County...An anonymous donor is covering the cost of the cathedral's design phase...will likely take several months. -- Craig W. Hartman/Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM)- Orange County Register (California)

Ahead of the curve: ...thanks to a revolution in digital modelling, architects are thinking outside the box, replacing straight lines with curves, right angles with bends, rectangles with sensuous silhouettes, plain, flat facades with shimmering folds and seams. Think Marilyn Monroe rather than Charlton Heston. -- Frank Gehry; Thom Mayne/Morphosis; Zaha Hadid; Daniel Libeskind; Renzo Piano; Santiago Calatrava; Rem Koolhaas; Chris Bosse/LAVA; Foster + Partners; Jean Nouvel [images]- The Australian

Playing to Plumper Audiences: A study...by Theatre Projects Consultants...found that the average standard width of seats in performing-arts theaters has expanded from 21 to 22 inches over the last two decades, "primarily due" to the concurrent rise in obesity. Over the course of the entire last century, the average width increased from 19 to 21 inches.- Wall Street Journal

Call for entries: U.S. Green Building Council and the Bank of America Charitable Foundation Launch Affordable Green

[Housing Grant Program for LEED for Neighborhood Development \(LEED ND\) Projects: application deadline: September 9- U.S. Green Building Council \(USGBC\)](#)

[Call for entries: Site Life: design an interim use for a prominent cleared site in Urban Splash's New Islington development in east Manchester. The temporary use will remain in place for at least one year; deadline: August 27- Property Week / Urban Splash \(UK\)](#)

[Call for entries: Expo 2010 Awards for pavilions, exhibits, or elements of pavilions and exhibits appearing at Expo 2010 in Shanghai; deadline: July 30- Exhibitor Magazine](#)

[Barry Elbasani, FAIA, 1941-2010: The architect known for plans and buildings that revitalized American cities passed away last week at 69. A recent conversation with the gruff optimist and realistic urbanist about his history, inspirations, and aspirations. By Kenneth Caldwell - ArchNewsNow](#)

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